V.—GOVERNMENT MOTION.

AMENDMENTS TO THE MADRAS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL RULES.

* THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM :—" Mr. Chairman, I move for leave to amend the Madras Legislative Council Rules as under :

Add *the following new Rule after Rule* 178 :—

" 178-*A*. (1) *The Committee shall have power to require the attendance of persons or the production of papers or records, if such a course is considered necessary for the discharge of its duties* :

Provided that Government may decline to produce a document on the ground that its disclosure would not be in the public interest.

(2) *A witness may be summoned by an order signed by the Secretary and shall produce such documents as are required for the use of the Committee.*

(3) *It shall be in the discretion of the Committee to treat any evidence tendered before it as secret or econfidntial.*" '

" Sir, as hon. Members are aware, this Rule 178 relates to the constitution of the Committee on Government Assurances. It has been provided under the rules framed by the Lok Sabha that their Committee on Government Assurances would have all the powers of a Committee of the House to call for persons, papers and records. It was suggested that it will be better to amend the Madras Legislative Council Rules also specifically authorising the Committee of the Council to require the attendance of the Secretaries to the Government before it in case the Committee is empowered to examine them as in the case of Lok Sabha. So, this amendment is moved."

DR. V. K. JOHN :—" I support this motion."

SRI T. PURUSHOTHAM :—" May I make a suggestion for the consideration of the Government? Could it not be better to say that the Chairman of the Committee shall have power to require the attendance of persons, etc., instead of saying that the Committee shall have the power."

* THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM :—" Sir, this follows what has been provided for under the Lok Sabha Rules."

MR. CHAIRMAN :—" Under Rule 187 of the Madras Council Rules, I now read the draft amendments and ask whether

the Hon. Minister has the leave of the Council. The amendments have been circulated to the hon. Members of this House and are also included in the Agenda. They read as follows :—

'*Add* the following new Rule after Rule 178 :—

"178-A. (1) The Committee shall have power to require the attendance of persons or the production of papers or records, if such a course is considered necessary for the discharge of its duties :

Provided that Government may decline to produce a document on the ground that its disclosure would not be in the public interest.

(2) A witness may be summoned by an order signed by the Secretary and shall produce such documents as are required for the use of the Committee.

(3) It shall be in the discretion of the Committee to treat any evidence tendered before it as secret or confidential.' "

"I wish to know whether the Hon. Minister has the leave of the Council.

"Since no hon. Member objects, I take it that the Hon. Minister has the leave of the House.

"Under Rule 188 of the Madras Council Rules, the draft amendments have now to be referred to a Select Committee. Six Members of the Select Committee have to be elected by the Council by means of the single transferable vote in accordance with the regulations framed in this behalf, the Chairman, Deputy Chairman, the Hon. the Mover of the motion being ex-officio Members of the Committee. One of the Members of the current Panel of Vice-Chairmen is to be nominated by me as a Member of the Committee. I fix 3 p.m. on Monday, the 8th August 1955, as the hour and day within which nominations may be handed over to the Secretary.

"If the number of candidates nominated exceeds the number of vacancies to be filled in, namely, six, then there will be an election between 12 noon and 2 p.m. on Tuesday, the 9th August 1955.

"I now adjourn the House till 3 p.m. on Monday, the 8th August 1955."

The House then adjourned.